

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 00939 160912Z
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PER-01 SS-15 NSC-05 LAB-04
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R 160810Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8230
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0939

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP APER LA SOCI
SUBJECT: LPDR DOCUMENTATION OF FOREIGN EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEESD

REF: VIENTIANE 0902

1. THE ANNOUNCED PLAN OF THE MFA TO ISSUE WORK CARDS TO FOREIGN MISSION EMPLOYEES, REPORTED REFTEL, HAS RESULTED TO DATE IN SEVENTEEN OF OUR LOCAL EMPLOYEES EITHER FORMALLY RESIGNING OR FLEEING ACROSS THE MEKONG TO THAILAND. INCLUDED IN LATTER CATEGORY WERE THE EMBASSY'S LAST TWO MECHANICS AND THE LOCAL GUARD SUPERVISOR. SEVERAL OF THE LESS SKILLED EMPLOYEES WHO RESIGNED STATED THEY PREFERRED TO "FARM" AS BY DOING SO THEY COULD PROVIDE FOR THEIR FAMILIES BETTER THAN ON EMBASSY SALARY.

2. SOME EMPLOYEES AND DOMESTIC SERVANTS ARE ASSOCIATING THE MINISTRY'S PROPOSED ISSUANCE OF WORK CARDS WITH RUMORS REPORTED PARA 3 REFTEL OF THE MINISTRY'S
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INTENTIONS TO ORGANIZE FOREIGN MISSIONS' LOCAL EMPLOYEES CENTRALLY AND TO FIX THEIR SALARIES AT A LOW RATE.

3. ALTHOUGH RUMORS CONCERNING CENTRALIZATION OF LOCAL EMPLOYEES BY THE MINISTRY CONTINUE TO CIRCULATE, NEITHER THIS EMBASSY NOR ITS LOCAL EMPLOYEES HAVE YET

BEN APPROACHED ON THIS SUBJECT. TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE ONLY THE BURMESE, GERMAN AND JAPANESE EMBASSIES HAVE BEEN ASKED TO HAVE A LOCAL EMPLOYEE REPORT TO THE MINISTRY FOR AN EXPLANATION OF THE CENTRALIZATION PLAN. APPARENTLY THE MINISTRY HAS INDICATED TO THESE LOCAL EMPLOYEES THAT IT INTENDS TO HAVE FOREIGN MISSIONS PAY U.S. DOLLAR EQUIVALENT OF LOCAL EMPLOYEES' CURRENT SALARIES THROUGH THE MINISTRY WHICH WOULD IN TURN PAY THE LOCAL EMPLOYEES IN KIP AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY SCALE, PRESUMABLY RETAINING THE DIFFERENCE.

4. COMMENT: THE FOREIGN MINISTRY PLAN TO ISSUE "WORK CARDS" TO FOREIGN MISSION LOCAL EMPLOYEES PLUS THE ACCOMPANYING RUMORS OF "CENTRALIZATION" SEEM TO BE THE IMMEDIATE FACTORS PROMPTING THE RECENT DEPARTURE OF A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF OUR LOCAL EMPLOYEES. OTHER FACTOR INCLUDED: A) THE DETERIORATING STANDARD OF LIVING IN VIENTIANE COUPLED WITH THE SOARING COST OF LIVING (THE KIP FREE MARKER EXCHANGE RATE REACHED AN ALL TIME HIGH OF 1800 - U.S. \$1 ON JUNE 15); AND B) POLICE ROUNDUPS IN EARLY JUNE OF VIENTIANE RESIDENTS, NOTABLY FORMER ROYAL ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL, FOR EXTENDED "SEMINARS".
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